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Request for the inclusion of an additional item in the agenda of the fifty-fifth session

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States

Letter dated 6 September 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Equatorial Guinea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with the provisions of rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, and on instructions from my Government, I am transmitting herewith an original document addressed to the Secretary-General by Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, in his capacity as current Chairman of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), requesting the inclusion of an additional item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States" in the agenda of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Narciso **Ntugu Abeso Oyana**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex

Explanatory memorandum

Letter dated 26 August 2000 from the President of Equatorial Guinea addressed to the Secretary-General

Since the establishment of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) in 1983, the heads of State of the member countries have sought to show their resolve to join forces to achieve subregional integration, as a means of better ensuring the well-being of their respective peoples. However, it must be acknowledged that most of the countries of Central Africa have been plagued by numerous conflicts and have thus been unable to attain the ambitious goal of making our subregion a centre for peace, cooperation and development.

To deal with this situation, we requested the United Nations to provide support, primarily through the establishment of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. Accordingly, the Committee's main purpose was to promote confidence-building measures and subregional cooperation. I take this opportunity to reiterate our gratitude to the United Nations for its ongoing support for the implementation of the Committee's programme of work.

Since its establishment, on 28 May 1992, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/37 B, which was adopted at the initiative of the States members of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa has served as a major forum for policy coordination among government representatives of the States of the Central African subregion. Its work has facilitated ongoing high-level consultations and has promoted the elaboration and adoption of significant confidence-building measures.

In this connection, the heads of State and Government of the countries members of ECCAS decided, in June 1999 in Malabo, to integrate into the structures of ECCAS the subregional mechanism for the settlement and prevention of conflicts in Central Africa, known as the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX). In addition, the heads of State and Government of the subregion decided to establish an early warning mechanism, a subregional parliament and a Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, all of which would operate under the auspices of ECCAS.

On 24 February 2000 in Malabo, the heads of State and Government of Central Africa signed the Protocol on COPAX and the Mutual Assistance Pact among the countries members of ECCAS.

I should like to stress that these important steps reflect the restructuring and revitalization of the functioning of ECCAS, which its member States have undertaken in order to enhance its ability to fulfil its traditional tasks of promoting economic and social development. This work can only be carried out in a climate of permanent peace and stability.

For the achievement of this vital objective for Central Africa, which is one of the richest, but also, unfortunately, the most troubled, of Africa's subregions, the continuous support of the United Nations is even more decisive.

To this end, on behalf of the States members of ECCAS (Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda and Sao Tome and Principe), I have the honour to request, in the spirit of the conclusions reached at the recent Summit of Heads of State and Government of ECCAS, who met in special session on 23 June 2000 in Libreville, the inclusion of an additional item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States" in the agenda of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

This will make it possible to plan ways of developing multisectoral cooperation between the United Nations and ECCAS, along the lines of the cooperation between the United Nations and the other regional economic communities (the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)), and to establish a true partnership for addressing, in a rational and coordinated manner, the issues affecting Central Africa, including security activities.

In this connection, the issues currently dealt with by the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa would be integrated into this new framework for direct cooperation between the United Nations and ECCAS.

At a time when the States of our subregion are showing greater determination to resolve the many differences with which they are faced, I am convinced of the need to establish an institutional framework that can enable them to continue to benefit from the rich experience of the United Nations in sensitive areas such as preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and peace-building, democratic institution-building, human rights and support for economic development.

This strengthening of relations would also enhance the General Assembly's ability to identify the nature and scope of the support which the international community and the United Nations system could provide to the States members of ECCAS with a view to building lasting development and peace in Central Africa.

(*Signed*) Obiang **Nguema Mbasogo**
President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea
and current Chairman of ECCAS